

# Book Reviews

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**THE AMA AND U.S. HEALTH POLICY SINCE 1940**—Frank D. Campion. Chicago Review Press, 820 North Franklin Street, Chicago, IL 60610, 1984. 538 pages, \$25.

I have just finished reading a recently published book entitled *The AMA and U.S. Health Policy* by Frank Campion. Campion was originally an editor for *Life* magazine and has been with the AMA staff since 1970. The book is primarily an account of happenings within the AMA since 1940, but it is far more than this. It is an excellent analysis of the forces that have conspired to create the present-day medical environment.

Campion begins with a description of the development, in the early 1900s, of our pluralistic health care delivery system founded on a laissez faire economy that created the most affluent middle class in history, along with a mistrust of government in general. Medical institutions were largely privately financed (only 20% had government funding) and as sociologist Oden Anderson points out, "The American hospitals were subsidized, without interest, or thought of repayment by the newly rich and not so rich."

This era ended with the Great Depression which virtually eliminated the affluent middle class and invited the early government intrusion into medical care. Also examined are the World War II and postwar eras of tremendous scientific advances, burgeoning specialization and seemingly inexhaustible government funding that irrevocably altered the course of medical care. Finally the present day socioeconomic scene of Medicare, Medicaid, FTC and PROs—which we all know too well—is scrutinized.

The book is alive with the people who have labored in the vineyards of organized medicine. Washington state's Bob Hunter reminisces, "Like my father, I have wanted above all to be a good physician. But I have also wanted to do some things on behalf of the profession and some things that I would consider to be on behalf of the people as a whole." One chapter is devoted entirely to Morris Fishbein, the gifted editor of *JAMA*, who was for several decades "Mr AMA." During much of that time the AMA was almost totally supported by income from *JAMA* and no dues were collected; consequently the editor had tremendous influence. Fishbein never held an elected office in the AMA but no one has been as powerful in the organization before or since.

There is one quotation that captures the essence of what membership in both the AMA and our state medical associations is all about. One longtime member says, "Joining the AMA is like joining a church. You don't do it because it pays or because you have to. You join it because you believe in it."

This is an excellent book because it outlines so clearly the medical heritage upon which we must build our future. I recommend it to all.

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**HUMAN SEXUALITY AND ITS PROBLEMS**—John Bancroft, MD, MRCP, FRCPsych, MRC Reproductive Biology Unit, Edinburgh; with the assistance of Philip Myerscough, FRCS(Ed), FRCOG, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Churchill Livingstone, Inc., 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1983. 448 pages, \$24.95.

In writing *Human Sexuality and Its Problems*, Dr John Bancroft has undertaken a monumental task of systematically reviewing both empirical and clinical literature on human sexuality. His approach encompasses both factual knowledge, clinical interventions and clinical wisdom. The book is primarily intended for health professionals who have interest in working with sexual problems but is also designed to be sufficiently broad to serve as a comprehensive text for those being introduced to the field.

Knowledge of human sexuality has expanded exponentially over the three decades since the initial Kinsey studies. Contributions to this understanding have come from anthropology, biology, physiology, psychology, sociology, medicine and virtually every other scientific discipline. Hence, the task of reviewing this

body of literature in any comprehensive way and integrating it into a systematic and understandable text is extremely difficult. Dr Bancroft has accomplished this task remarkably well. One will find, in this book, a surprising amount of depth. Concepts from man's evolutionary past, cultural heritage and genetic endowments are all well integrated with current behavioral and social systems theory. While this degree of comprehensiveness does not allow the indepth coverage of some topics that more specialized texts might provide, it is very difficult to fault the author for being inappropriately shortsighted in any topical area. He shows a wide range of familiarity with both specialized surgical procedures, psychological views of diagnosis and treatment, and social-biological views of the role of sexuality in the human experience.

The author has systematically excluded or minimized in this text psychoanalytic and certain other philosophical approaches to human sexuality. In doing so, however, it is clear that this does not represent an oversight but rather, is a systematic effort to approach the topic in the most scholarly fashion. Dr Bancroft is explicit about his desire to stay within the mainstream of conventional scientific scholarship. It is on this latter basis that he systematically excludes intensive assessment or integration of Freudian theory with the facts presented throughout the book. He maintains that psychoanalytic viewpoints have erected many barriers to scientific process and elects, therefore, to make his presentation primarily with literature based in the scientific method and the spirit of empirical rather than philosophical investigation. While one may disagree with this point of view, its adoption does lend a degree of consistency to the volume which would otherwise not be possible.

It is also remarkable, even in a field as highly colored by moralities as sexual functioning, to find an author who is as willing as Dr Bancroft to be direct about both his philosophical and moral positions. These positions are stated straightforwardly, at the outset, and serve as precursors to developing a line of reasoning that subsequently permeates the entire volume. The author is very explicit about his own morality relative to the use of sexuality for recreational purposes. His explicitness about his own viewpoint lends a certain degree of credibility to his presentation which one cannot help but find to be refreshing. Again, while one may disagree with the author's particular morality, being aware of it at the outset of the volume assists one in assessing the interpretations which are lent to the multitude of facts and empirical investigations reviewed. For example, with an understanding of the author's moral viewpoint, his great cautiousness in recommending surgical correction for erectile failure disorders and his contrasting liberality in the acceptance of sexual surrogates become more understandable. Surprisingly, there are few areas in which one can specifically point to the author's intrusion of his own belief systems into his representation of the facts and empirical data. This book presents an intriguingly balanced approach to the issue of human sexuality and its treatments.

If the volume is to be criticized, which it need not be, it can be done so on only two grounds. First, the proofreading of the volume is somewhat sloppy and often distracting. There are numerous typographical errors which are only compounded for American readers by the differences in spelling between the English and the American presentations. Second, the effort to